

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3014

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR MO SS AG

SUBJECT: LIBYAN MOVES RE THE SAHARA

REF: ALGIER 0522

1. IN MOVES APPARENTLY TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE PROCLAMATION OF A SHARAN REPUBLIC BY THE POLISARIO FRONT, QADHAFI HAS MADE PUBLIC A MESSAGE HE SENT TO KING HASSAN ON FEBRUARY 26, AND THE LIBYAN PRESS ALSO PRINTS A PHOTO-COPY OF A MANUSCRIPT LETTER FROM THE POLISARIO FRONT TO PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH OF MAURITANIA DATED THE SAME DAY.

2. QADHAFI'S LETTER TO "REVEREND BROTHER KING" HASSAN COVERS MOSTLY OLD GROUND, AND IS NOTABLE MOSTLY FOR ITS HIGH MORAL TONE. QADHAFI RECALLS, AS HE HAS PUBLICLY BEFORE, THAT HE WAS THE FIRST ARAB LEADER TO CALL FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE SAHARA, AND THAT UNTIL 1975 HE WAS ALONE IN THIS. UNTIL THEN NONE OF THE OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT (ALGERIA AS WELL

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AS MOROCCO, THAT IS) WOULD LET ARMS TO THE POLISARIO CROSS THEIR TERRITORY. QADHAFI REPEATS THAT ACCOUNT

HE GAVE TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN JANUARY ABOUT HIS ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE THE POLISARIO LEADERS TO JOIN KING HASSAN, AND THE GUARANTEES HE SOUGHT AND RECEIVED FROM THE KING CONCERNING THEIR TREATMENT. "GOD KNOWS HOW HARD I TRIED TO CONVINCE THEM", QADHAFI SAYS.

3. QADHAFI SAYS HE IS NOT AGAINST MOROCCO, OR THE MOROCCAN ARMY "WHOSE BLOOD IS STILL FRESH ON THE GOLAN", AND HE IS NOT A PARTY TO ANY TERRITORIAL DISPUTE. HE SIMPLY WANTS TO SEE THE SAHARAN PEOPLE EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. HE IS IN FAVOR OF ARAB UNITY, BUT NOT ARAB UNITY IMPOSED BY FORCE AGAINST PEOPLES; THIS, HE REMINDS THE KING SLYLY, WOULD "CHANGE THE MAP OF BOTH MY COUNTRY AND YOURS". QADHAFI'S MESSAGE CONCLUDES WITH A LEARNED QUOTE FROM AN ARAB CLASSICAL POET TO THE EFFECT THAT MY PEOPLE FAILED TO FOLLOW MY ADVICE, AND LIVED TO REGRET IT.

4. THE POLISARIO LETTER TO MUKHTAR OULD DADDAH WARNS HIM OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF A PROLONGED WAR FOR THE MAURITANIAN PEOPLE. ETHNIC TIES MAKE IT "LOGICAL, NORMAL, AND RIGHT" THAT THE MAURITANIAN PEOPLE SUPPORT THE SAHARAN PEOPLE, SINCE THE TWO PEOPLE HAVE COMMON INTERESTS AND FACE A COMMON DANGER (I.E. MOROCCAN EXPANSIONISM). "FEAR GOD, O MUKHTAR, FROM THE POOR ON WHOM YOU ARE IMPOSING TAXES, SO THAT THEY MAY LOSE THEIR HOMELAND ONE DAY OR THE NEXT".

5. COMMENT: QADHAFI MAY NOT BE A PARTY TO THE SAHARA CONFLICT, BUT HE IS PLAYING A PART IN THE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN ON THE ALGERIAN SIDE. AT THE SAME TIME HIS OBLIQUE REMINDER TO THE ALGERIAN IN HIS MESSAGE TO HASSAN THAT HE WAS A SUPPORTER OF THE POLISARIO LONG BEFORE THEY WERE WORTH NOTING, AS IS HIS FLATTERING REFERENCE TO THE BRAVERY OF THE MOROCCAN ARMY.
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